

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 1, 2000. Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. Per this response, Claims 4, 10, and 19 have been canceled and claims 5, 11, and 20 have been amended.

SYNOPSIS OF THE INVENTION:

The Applicant's invention is a papermaking belt comprising two laminae joined together in a face-to-face relationship to form a unitary laminate. The first lamina comprises a foraminous imprinting member having a paper web contacting surface and a second surface. The foraminous imprinting member may comprise a reinforcing structure having a patterned framework disposed on the paper web contacting surface. Alternately, the imprinting member may comprise interwoven yarns. The second lamina is a dewatering felt composed of a secondary base with nonwoven batting joined thereto. The second lamina has a first surface juxtaposed with and attached to the second surface of the first lamina such that the batting extends through the first lamina.

35 U.S.C. §112 REJECTIONS:

The Examiner has rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner found Claim 4 to be indefinite because it recites the limitation "hydraulic connection" in which "hydraulic" has the accepted meaning "operated by the movement or force of water." As explained in the Applicant's previous response, the Examiner provides an accepted definition, however, Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary provides an alternate definition for hydraulic as "relating to water or other liquid in motion." Thus, one skilled in the art would interpret "hydraulic connection" as used by the Applicant to mean "a connection providing for the movement of water therebetween" or simply as "a fluid connection." Nevertheless, in order to advance the prosecution on the merits, per this response, the Applicant has canceled Claims 4, 10, and 19 and has amended Claims 5, 11 and 20 depending therefrom.

35 U.S.C. 102(b) REJECTIONS:

Once again the Examiner has rejected Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Trokhan, et al. (5,556,509).

In order to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim. MPEP §2131. "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." MPEP §2131 citing *Verdegaal Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

Trokhan, et al. discloses a single lamina comprising a dewatering felt composed of a batt of natural or synthetic fibers joined, such as by needling, to a support structure formed of woven filaments. (Column 7, lines 38-40). The dewatering felt has a web patterning layer joined to a web facing surface of the "felt". The web patterning layer preferably comprises a liquid photosensitive resin deposited on the web facing surface of the felt so that a portion of the patterning layer penetrates the web facing surface and is securely bonded thereto by radiation curing. (Column 7, lines 16-20).

Unlike Trokhan (5,556,509), the Applicant's claimed papermaking belt comprises a laminate of two separate laminae joined in a face-to-face relationship. The first lamina comprises a "reinforcing structure" with a patterned framework disposed thereon. The second lamina comprises a secondary base with a batting joined thereto. As shown in Figure 2 of the Applicant's invention, the first lamina comprises a reinforcing structure with a patterned framework disposed thereon, wherein the reinforcing structure comprises a woven fabric. (See Page 9, lines 21-25). The second lamina comprises a nonwoven batt of natural or synthetic fibers joined to a secondary base formed of woven filaments. (See Page 6, lines 3-5 of the specification).

The Examiner contends that Figure 2 of '509 discloses a reinforcing structure (240) with a patterned framework (250) disposed thereon. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's interpretation of the drawing. According to '509 Column 7, lines 37-40, item (240) of Figure 2 comprises a batt of natural or synthetic fibers joined, such as by needling, to a support structure (244) formed of woven filaments. A web patterning layer is joined to a web facing surface of the batt. The web patterning layer preferably comprises a liquid photosensitive resin deposited on the web facing surface of the felt so that a portion of the patterning layer penetrates the web facing surface and is securely bonded thereto by radiation curing. (Column 7, lines 16-20).

Unlike the Applicant's invention claiming a papermaking belt comprising two laminae joined in a face-to-face relationship where the first lamina comprises an imprinting member having a patterned framework disposed on web contacting side thereof and the second lamina comprises a dewatering felt, '509 discloses a single lamina dewatering felt having a web

patterning layer joined to the web facing surface of the felt. Accordingly, Trokhan does not teach every element of the Applicant's claimed invention, specifically, the first lamina comprising the reinforcing structure with the patterned framework disposed thereon. Therefore, the Applicant's invention is not anticipated by Trokhan.

35 U.S.C. 103(a) REJECTION:

The Examiner rejected Claims 9-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Trokhan (5,565,509) in view of Trokhan (5,624,790). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

In Claims 9-15, the Applicant claims a papermaking belt comprising two lamina joined together in a face-to-face relationship to form a unitary laminate. The first lamina comprises interwoven yarns. The second lamina is a dewatering felt composed of a secondary base with nonwoven batting joined thereto.

In Claims 16-25, the Applicant claims a papermaking belt comprising two lamina wherein the first lamina comprises two layers. The first layer is composed of woven yarns forming discrete imprinting knuckles and the second layer comprises a patterned framework disposed on the first layer. The second lamina is a dewatering felt composed of a secondary base with nonwoven batting joined thereto.

According to the MPEP § 2143, to establish the prima facie case of obviousness, the prior art relied upon coupled with the knowledge generally available in the art at the time of the invention must contain some suggestion or incentive that would have motivated the skilled artisan to modify a reference or combine references.

As previously explained, Trokhan (5,565,509) discloses a single lamina papermaking belt comprising a dewatering felt with a web patterning layer disposed on the web contacting surface of the felt. Trokhan (5,624,790) discloses a backside textured papermaking belt comprising a reinforcing structure and a patterned framework on a web contacting surface of the belt. The patterned frameworks on the web contacting surfaces of the belts disclosed in each of the two references produce structured paper.

As explained in the previous response, Trokhan (5,565,509) neither discloses nor provides the necessary motivation or incentive to combine the single lamina dewatering felt in a face-to-face relationship with a second lamina to form a laminate, much less combine the dewatering felt with a second lamina comprising a backside textured papermaking belt. As explained above, the web patterning layer on the single lamina dewatering felt of Trokhan (5,565,509) produces structured paper. Consequently, there is no motivation to combine the

dewatering felt of Trokhan (5,565,509) with the backside textured belt of Trokhan (5,624,790) in order to make use of the patterned framework on the belt.


The Examiner contends that there is clear and strong motivation to combine the reinforcing layer of Trokhan (5624790) with the dewatering felt of Trokhan (5556509). According to the Examiner, Trokhan (09) suggests increasing the strength of the dewatering felt as well as extending its useful life. The Examiner refers to Column 12, lines 55-65 and Column 15, lines 33-36 of Trokhan (09) as providing support for such motivation. However, neither of the two sections referenced by the Examiner discusses anything pertaining to increasing the strength or extending the useful life of the dewatering felt. Thus, the alleged motivation fails. (com '90 not 09)

Column 12, lines 55-65 and Column 15, lines 33-36 of the secondary reference Trokhan' 790 discuss increasing the strength and extending the useful belt life. The papermaking belt disclosed in Trokhan '790 is an endless belt which travels around a loop which includes a means for applying fluid pressure differential to a paper web such as a vacuum pickup shoe. The loop also includes a blow-through air predryer for drying the paper web. (Column 10, lines 49-52). The papermaking process described in Trokhan '790 and the papermaking belt disclosed therein apply to blow-through air drying papermaking processes which typically do not include dewatering felts. One skilled in the art would know that dewatering felts are used in conventional papermaking processes. Consequently, there would be no motivation to combine the through-air-drying papermaking belt disclosed in '790 with the conventional dewatering felt disclosed in Trokhan (5,556,509).

Accordingly, the Applicant's invention is patentable over Trokhan (5,565,509) in view Trokhan (5,624,790).

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-18, and 20-25 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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